

Closeout for M0002004

On January 27, 2000, a Program Officer (PO1)¹ told us about his concerns that a PI² might be trying to increase his odds of getting an award by submitting the same proposal to different programs. PO1 said he received a proposal (proposal 1)³ that seemed more appropriate for another PO's (PO2)⁴ program, and he discussed the proposal with PO2. PO1 learned that PO2 was already reviewing that proposal (proposal 2).⁵ PO1 and PO2 discussed how to handle proposal 2; the practice of PO1's division is that it normally asks a PI to withdraw a duplicate proposal.

The PI told us after he submitted proposal 1, he received a letter from NSF indicating that his proposal did not conform to NSF guidelines;⁶ it specifically mentioned the references (PO2 had noted the references did not have any titles associated with them). The PI said he corrected the references and resubmitted the proposal (which became proposal 2). He was very surprised that it went to a different division.

We learned from one of NSF's FastLane experts, that FastLane would consider proposal 2 as an independently submitted, *i.e.*, new, proposal. We also learned that FastLane does not have a specific provision for a cover letter where the PI could let NSF know the "new" proposal is a correction of an already existing one rather than a new submission. Given the limitations of FastLane, and the evidence supporting of the PI's story, this inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken on this case.

cc: Integrity, IG

¹ (footnote redacted).

² (footnote redacted).

³ (footnote redacted).

⁴ (footnote redacted).

⁵ (footnote redacted).

⁶ (footnote redacted).